

A Brief History of "6673"

Aldo Tambellini

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In 1966, I made my first video in New York City. It was a tape made by shining lights directly into the video camera. These lights slowly began to burnout the vidicon leaving permanent black spots that showed on the recorded tape. The tape was made upstairs from my theatre, later to be named the "Black Gate Theatre" and with my very first video equipment, which I bought before the portapac. It was difficult at that time to find labs where I could make copies of this tape. I did find a place near La Guardia Airport called Video Flight, which was transferring movies onto tapes for the airline companies. They agreed to copy the tape. As they were copying the tape, I saw test patterns and other electronic images on the monitors that excited me. I spoke with the young engineers and decided to collaborate with them returning to make a second tape of the electronic images. This manipulation of the test patterns became my second tape. The sound heard on the tape was from an oscilloscope, which I controlled and through the sound manipulating the images. Further into the tape, the sound is my own voice improvising as I reacted to the images. The tape in black and white was shown simultaneously on four monitors to enthusiastic audiences in several locations in Upstate New York through a grant from the NY State Council of the Arts.

In 1973, Public Access Television in N.Y.C. Channel 13, opened a new television lab giving access to it to some artists. The 55 minute black and white tape from 1966 described above was reprocessed in 1973 at Channel 13 using the Paik-Abe Synthesizer; therefore, the title "6673".

The tape "6673" was transferred onto DVD in May 2003, thirty years later, in New York City at CTL Electronics the same place where I bought my first Sony Portopac.

See the interview in Arts Canada, "A Conversation on electronics and Black TV" with Aldo Tambellini and with four engineers from Video Flight.